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SIGMA XI QUARTERLY

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THE COMING CONVENTION

In accordance with the call of President Charles S. Howe, the Eighteenth Convention of Sigma Xi will be held at Columbia University in New York City on Wednesday, December 27, 1916. Further details regarding the time and place of meeting will be published in the December number of the QUARTERLY.

This constitutes an official notice to chapters to take up the question of the appointment of delegates. Since, according to the terms of the Constitution, the Convention is composed of duly authorized delegates from chapters represented, those chapters which fail to appoint representatives will be prevented thereby from taking part in the deliberations. It is important that each chapter should be represented both for the general welfare of the Society and for the good of the individual chapter.

It is urged that the chapters should select delegates who will discharge the duties as well as accept the privileges granted them. It naturally follows that those chapters are most influential which are represented by men of standing and of familiarity with the aims and ideals of the organization as well as of sympathy with its purposes.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

At the next convention of Sigma Xi, the question of associate membership will come up again for consideration. As indicated in the record of the Executive Committee meeting printed in this number, the question was referred to the committee by the Columbus Convention, and after due consideration the plan has now been recommended for adoption by the Society. It is important that members should refresh their minds on the origin and history of the movement.

Active discussion of the question began shortly before the foundation of the *QUARTERLY*, and most of the important stages in the consideration of the problem have been recorded in these pages. The attention of members is particularly directed to an article by Professor Nichols, a former President of Sigma Xi, which was published in the *QUARTERLY* (Vol. I, p. 87) under the title of Proposed Dual Membership. In connection with this, the recommendations for a revision of the Constitution contained in the same number (pp. 95-97) give information with reference to the form in which the proposal first came officially before the Society.

It is perhaps hardly correct to say that this was the first time at which the change was submitted to the organization, for the Washington Convention in 1911 considered both the question of fellows and that of associates, and motions to add both classes of membership were defeated.

At the Atlanta meeting in 1913, Professor Nichols as Chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Amendments presented the recommendations of that committee, including amendments to provide for a class of associate members as well as the class of active members. The discussion of this question will be found in the *QUARTERLY* for March, 1914 (Vol. II, p. 3). In the same number, Professor Walker, under the title, Why a Dual Membership, presented forcibly the arguments against the plan. The amendments in question were recommitted and, as a result, the committee printed in the *QUARTERLY* (Vol. II, pp. 58, 68) a proposed phraseology covering the associate membership, an explanation of the terms, and a discussion of the desirability of two classes of membership. The committee which formulated this report consisted of three men who have been Presidents of the organization and who have devoted many years to the advancement of its interests. It would be difficult to find a more representative body or one more intimately familiar with the workings of the Society and the difficulties that have been encountered in various places.

After a joint meeting of this committee with another, the full text of the amendments proposed was printed in the *QUARTERLY* for December (Vol. II, pp. 105-109). The Philadelphia Convention debated the problem long and seriously, and while the final vote was adverse to the precise change proposed in the amendments then pend-

ing, it was equally clear that a strong majority of the delegates felt the advisability of some change, and a motion was unanimously adopted requesting a report for the next convention on plans for securing greater elasticity in membership in the different chapters. The call of President Howe for the Columbus Convention which was printed in the *QUARTERLY* for September, 1915 (Vol. III, pp. 65-67) lays emphasis again on the importance of this question.

Thus far, the proposals had involved a uniform plan for the entire Society, but at the Columbus Convention certain amendments were presented providing ways and means for introducing associate membership into those chapters desirous of utilizing such a plan (Vol. IV, pp. 6-7). These amendments were laid over under the Constitution with the suggestion that the Executive Committee should consider some details and report its suggestions to the next convention.

From this very condensed report of the situation, it will be seen that the matter has been under formal discussion in three conventions, that it has been referred to several official committees, and that each one of them has confirmed the desirability of some action. During this time the details of the plan submitted have been perfected distinctly. The optional provision for associate membership which is the final outcome of this discussion has been approved by one convention, rediscussed and reapproved by the Executive Committee at its last meeting, and accordingly will be presented to the New York Convention. It is to be hoped that this convention may finally pass upon the matter.

In all of this discussion the matter has never been more clearly put than in the single sentence with which the committee of three on Constitutional Amendments opened its explanation of the amendment providing for this plan: "Associate membership for promise; active membership for accomplishment."